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BUSHRANGING YARNS.

EVERY country has at some time or other had its own type of what the Yankees call 'road-agents.' Italian banditti have long held a place in story as romantic scoundrels, whose picturesqueness went far to atone for their sins, though sceptics have not been wanting to insinuate that they did not always pursue their avocation in the 'green velvet jacket with a two-inch tail' in which Mr Tupman distinguished himself. A glamour of romance hung round the 'gentleman of the road' who 'stuck-up' our ancestors in such a courteous, polished, and gentlemanly manner that it must have been quite a pleasure to be robbed. Dick Turpin, too, and Robin Hood, the king of outlaws, when will they be forgotten? Never, surely, while the English language lasts.

This universal tendency to canonise into a hero every one that rides a horse and robs, has thrown a halo over even the Australian bushranger. Some people—generally town-dwellers who have not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance—consider him a splendid fellow, cruelly treated by the police. What the police think, is quite another thing; but then they are prejudiced, perhaps, by being so frequently shot, the gentlest of bushrangers never missing a chance at a 'bobby.' It is a case of no quarter on one side at least; and as the other side is frequently hampered by red-tape and uniforms, chasing bushrangers is not always an unmixed bliss.

It is easy to see how bushranging arose in convict settlements in the early days. A prisoner escaped, made for the bush, and having nothing to live on, was forced to steal. He never got home-sick, for convict life in those days was by no means 'all beer and skittles,' especially for a runaway; so, though sure of a warm welcome from his old friend the cat, he restrained his longing and stopped away. Old prisoners to a man were his friends, warning him of danger, and putting pursuers off the track; good offices,

in return for which the bushranger made a point of never robbing one of the convict class; still further keeping up his popularity by being generous at other folk's expense, a plan common with 'knights of the road' in all ages, and which has often prevented or delayed their capture.

Tasmania has produced bushrangers of a rather too thrilling type, whose exploits would hardly make nice reading, it is said; and as some of the police were old convicts, it was often some time before these bushrangers were caught. South Australia, not having been a convict settlement, has not experienced much exciting work on her own account, only a few half-hearted attempts being made; partly, perhaps, because her mounted police had a nasty way of capturing a man first and asking his name afterwards, which was disconcerting to bushrangers, and sometimes to other people too. For instance, an inspector and some troopers were hunting for escaped Tasmanian bushrangers in Kangaroo Island. Seeing three men come out of a hut, they rushed upon them, knocked them down, knelt on their chests, and holding pistols to their heads, demanded their names. 'P——' gasped the inspector's captive; and this being the name of a well-known settler, the three representatives of the law had to get up and apologise. The foregoing proceedings may seem rather unceremonious, but it should be remembered that if a policeman asked a bushranger his name, the chances were that he did not live to receive an answer.

The South Australian police have always tried to give their quarry as little chance of escape or retaliation as possible; while others who preferred to make sure of the identity of their man often died of their success. Two Tasmanian policemen knocked at the door of a hut one night with the words, 'Open to the police. The door was opened at once, and they were both shot down; one falling dead on the threshold, while the other managed to drag himself away in the darkness. It does not do to be

too straightforward with men of that stamp; a pat on the shoulder 'in the Queen's name' by no means meets the case, and any one who tried it would not be likely to repeat the experiment. A police magistrate and a trooper were once in hot pursuit of Morgan, the well-known bushranger. He made for some young timber, and disappeared. They followed till they came to his camp, where they stayed, in the hope of his return. Most incautiously, they lighted a fire. Morgan came back, made a rustling to attract their attention, and when they came to the door to look out, shot them both dead. One would think that a few affairs of this kind would cool the ardour of the warmest admirers of the noble bushranger; but then the sufferers were policemen, who are popularly supposed not to feel ill-treatment, or to mind being killed now and then in performance of their duty. Perhaps a personal experience of sticking-up might be more effectual, especially if their hero, besides relieving them of all spare cash, required them to swap horses, greatly to their own disadvantage, an engaging little way he has sometimes.

It must be a disagreeable shock to a lonely traveller to find himself covered by a revolver, perhaps two, and to have to stand by with his hands above his head while the robbers proceed to appropriate his valuables. 'Bail-up!' too, the words with which bushrangers demand submission, simply add insult to injury, for a 'bail' is a contrivance somewhat on the principle of the stocks in which a cow's head is fixed while she is milked.

A notable example of pluck was drawn by a woman in Queensland. She was alone when she saw some men approaching, whom she rightly guessed to be bushrangers. There was a considerable amount of money in the house, and for a moment she did not know what to do. Fortunately, it was in notes. She rolled them into a ball, and slipped them inside her dress and under her arm just as the men, who were masked, came in. What her feelings were when, after searching the house, they proceeded to search her, may be imagined; but she kept her own counsel, and saved the money, for, being a woman, she was not required to hold up her arms.

Pluck and cheek are the two most striking characteristics of bushrangers, and it is perhaps the latter which commands most admiration. There certainly is something very impressive in the cheek of a handful of men who 'stick-up' not only a station or a bank, but a whole town, as the Kelleys did. But, then, Ned Kelly had gained a wonderful hold on people's minds, and did things with a high and lordly air, as, for instance, when he politely returned a very valuable horse on being informed that it belonged to a lady. He seemed invulnerable too;

bullets passed harmless, and people began to think he bore a charmed life, till they found that he wore armour, made from ploughshares by a friendly smith. He even wore a helmet, and would, in fact, have been more at home when armour was the rule. Had he been born in the days of chivalry, he might have been a famous knight, and his feats of arms sung by poets, and handed down to his descendants as a proud inheritance; but as he had the misfortune to stumble on the nineteenth century, when it is not the thing to ride about killing people and appropriating their property, he was not appreciated, but, after a long chase, was caught and hanged.

Such a very mild instance of bushranging that the sufferer—the manager of a run—described it as 'being stuck-up in a friendly sort of way,' occurred in South Australia between forty and fifty years ago. He had been warned that three men had stuck-up and robbed a man's hut and fired at his wife, so had kept watch all night. The shepherds went out early in the morning, leaving him alone; still no one came. When the shepherds returned to breakfast, three other men were with them; but they had often called in, in passing from their work, and though they carried guns, Mr M—— thought nothing of it, till one marched in and demanded 'tucker,' while another stood gun in hand at the window, and the third mounted guard at the door; then it dawned upon him that he was unmistakably stuck-up. He asked them if they had taken to the bush, and receiving a cool affirmative, said he would give them nothing; they must take what they wanted. 'Well, we don't want much,' said the spokesman. 'To begin with, where's the damper?' Being told that there was only one baked, he said: 'Well, I won't take all,' and cutting it in two, took half. After taking some tea and sugar, he asked for meat. Finding that there was none cooked, but some in the pot boiling, the men decided to wait, their leader meanwhile appropriating half of the manager's ammunition. After patiently waiting till the meat was ready, he produced a bottle of brandy, and insisted on every one taking a drink as a parting compliment, then took himself off with a friendly 'Good-morning.' These were but raw beginners in the bushranging line, and were not destined to achieve greatness therein; for a few days later they stuck-up a bush public-house, got tipsy, and were most ingloriously caught in consequence.

But Morgan, already mentioned, brought it quite to a fine art, showing a good deal of grim humour too. As a Red Indian tortures his victims and gloats over their pains, so Morgan aggravated his, and thoroughly enjoyed their discomfort; in fact, he became quite an artist in aggravation, and while he stole people's money, or, worse still, their horses, he took

special pains to do it in the most provoking way. The following are a few of the yarns told about him.

The overseer of a run was visiting one of the shepherds' huts; on entering, he saw a man lying on the bunk. 'What are you doing here?' he said. 'Turn out of this!'

The next thing he knew, a revolver was unpleasantly near his head. 'Throw up your hands or I'll put daylight through you,' remarked a drawling voice in a by-the-way sort of manner. 'Bail-up in that corner.'

Mr — obeyed. Morgan then bound him, and mounting, led him ignominiously to a post. Having tied him up securely, he went on to the head station, where he found the owner sitting down to dinner. 'Can I have some tucker?' he asked.

'Oh yes; go to the kitchen and they will give you some.—I didn't much like the look of the fellow,' said Mr G—, in telling the story, 'so I turned my head to see if my gun was in easy distance. It was loaded with ball, as I intended to shoot a bullock. On turning round again, I saw a five-barrelled revolver close to my face, while I heard the words, "Oh no, Mr G—; that game won't do. You bail-up in that corner and keep quiet." Well,' said G—, 'I had to do it, while the rascal, coolly placing a revolver on each side of his plate, proceeded to eat my dinner. He then took my gun, and bailed-up two or three people I had on the place, took about seventy-five pounds' worth of property in the shape of horses, saddles, bridles, and rations; and then in the afternoon mounted his horse and took his departure, saying at the last moment, "Mr G—, you had better look after that overseer of yours. He's tied to a corner-post at the other end of the horse paddock. I s'pect he's most dead by this time."'

Not long after this Morgan stuck-up a station both the owners of which were quite young fellows. The elder brother was drafting cattle in the stockyard when Morgan rode up. 'Bail-up, all you fellows in a row alongside that fence there,' was the bushranger's first order. The men obeyed; but young K— demurred. 'Hand over one of those pistols and fight me fair,' he said.—'No, no; that don't suit me,' was the answer. 'Bail-up, or I'll put a bullet through you.' Such an invitation was not to be gainsaid. Just then the younger brother looked out to see what the matter was, was instantly covered by Morgan's revolver, and ordered to 'Come out there, and bail-up alongside those men.' Having got all his prisoners together, Morgan set one of his men to keep guard, and proceeded to take possession of the two best horses and destroy all arms and ammunition.

Morgan's next was to stick-up a wool-shed at shearing-time, and order the overseer, against whom he had a grudge, to come out and kneel down to be shot. The man's wife rushed out and threw herself before her husband, imploring Morgan to shoot her instead. He told the man he might 'clear out,' which gracious permission did not need to be repeated. He then amused himself by standing over the owner and making him sign cheques for all the shearers, and finally

a large one for himself—a proceeding which had the double advantage of increasing his popularity while it specially vexed his victim.

It will be seen that he was getting quite artistic in aggravation. The feelings of men forced to stand by and see their dinners eaten or their horses stolen were unenviable enough; signing cheques for a man one detested might perhaps be worse; but for 'pure cussedness,' as the Americans would say, the following stands unexcelled. We quote word for word from an account written by a well-known Australian near whose run the affair took place. Morgan had met the manager of a run riding through the bush. 'The manager rode with him a short distance, when he said to him, "By Jove! where did you get that horse from? he's got my brand on."—"Ah, just you tumble off your nag, or I'll put daylight through your carcass," said the bushranger, pointing a loaded revolver at his head. The argument was unanswerable, so B— had to dismount. "Now," continued Morgan, "pull off your clothes, all of them." This was done, and B— stood under *veritas*. The day was scorching hot. "Now make tracks for home;" and off started poor B— to walk nine miles in the burning sun.'

Morgan's last appearance was in Victoria, where he stuck-up a station, assembled all the people in one room, and made the daughters of the house play the piano all night. In the morning, as he was walking between the owner of the run and a neighbour, carrying as usual two revolvers, a station hand caught up a gun, took aim at forty yards, and shot him through the back.

Such are some of the yarns told about old-time bushranging. The great severity exercised towards convicts may be said to have started it, by making men desperate and predisposing people to sympathise. For it is not every one who would care to hand a fellow-creature over to the treatment which, if all accounts be true, the convicts suffered then. Among the later generation the men have, as a rule, been wanted for horse or cattle stealing, and have taken to the bush to avoid the police. Others, again, have taken to it from a love of excitement or a craving for notoriety. It is not safe to be positive about anything, but the days of bushranging seem nearly over. It is more than ten years now since the Kelly gang were dispersed, and as yet they have had no successors, save for a few spasmodic attempts from the would-be-hero type, which hardly count, the 'heroes' as a rule being only too glad to sink into private life again. The country gets more settled year by year, and though there are rough men and rough times on gold rushes or new mining towns, the revolver does not flourish with such wild luxuriance as in the 'Wild West,' and the bowie-knife is fortunately unknown. As soon as a rush is started, wardens are on the ground to settle disputes, and the law is represented by mounted troopers, so there is no chance for every one to 'do as seemed good in his own eyes,' as appears to be the practice in frontier States, unless American writers have cruelly misrepresented their countrymen. So the bushranger of the future, if he ever appears, will have to be very wide awake, and a smart man altogether, to carry on his trade at all, and the game would be scarcely worth the candle. There may be openings in the burglary line or in other sophis-

ticated forms of stealing—mining swindles, for instance; but the day for that picturesque straightforward form of robbery called bushranging is past.

MY SHIPMATE LOUISE.

THE ROMANCE OF A WRECK.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—CAPE HORN.

It was on one of the closing days of the month of December that I brought the barque's head to a west south-west course for the rounding of Cape Horn. It was happily the summer season in those parts, their midsummer, indeed, and I was glad to believe that the horrors of this passage would be mitigated by a sun that in the month of June shines for scarcely six hours in the day over the ice-laden surge of this, the most inhospitable, the most bitterly dreary tract of waters upon the face of the world.

Down to the latitude of the Falkland Islands we had sighted, from the hour of my taking command of the barque, but four sail, so vast is the ocean, and so minute a speck does a ship make upon it. But whilst the loom of the land about Berkley Sound was hanging in a blue and windy shadow, with a gleam as of snow upon it away out upon our starboard beam, we fell in with a whaler, a vessel rigged as ours was; a round-bowed, motherly old craft, jogging along under a load of boats suspended over her sides from the extremities of thick wooden davits.

She had been visible at daybreak right ahead, and she was showing clear upon the sea over our bow, when I came on deck shortly after eight bells to relieve Lush, who had had the watch since four o'clock.

'What have we there?' said I, bringing Braine's old leather telescope out of the companion and putting my eye to it. 'A squab old whaler, as I may suppose by her boats: Cape Horn topgallant-masts; a sawed-off square sea-wagon after the true Nantucket pattern.'

'I've been awaiting for you to come on deck,' said the carpenter. 'We don't want to run her down. We've got nothen to say to her, and so 'ud better keep out of hail.—Shift the course will you, sir?'

There was nothing in the *sir* to qualify the offensive tone of command with which he addressed me. I looked at him fixedly, taking care, however, to keep a good grip on my temper.

'What are you afraid of?' I asked. 'Are any of the crew likely to hail her if we pass within speaking distance?'

'I'd like to know what man there is amongst us as 'ud have the courage to do it,' he exclaimed, his face darkening to the thought, and his eyes travelling up and down my body, as though in search of some part on which to settle.

'Why wait for me to shift your helm, man?' said I.

'The navigation's in your hands,' he answered sullenly; 'if your calculations don't turn out correct, it mustn't be because of any man ameddling with the course whilst you was below.'

Miss Temple at this moment arrived on deck and joined me.

'A pity to run away,' said I; 'we're sailing

three feet to that chap's one, and will be passing him like smoke. There's been nothing to look at for a long time. It'll be a treat to our shore-going eyes to see a strange face, though we catch but a glimpse. You don't think I'll hail her, I hope?'

'I hope!' he responded with a coarse ironical sneer and a rude stare of suspicion.

'By Jove, then,' said I, with an effusion of temper I instantly regretted, 'since you have forced this command upon me, I'll take what privileges it confers, and be hanged to it! My orders are to keep the ship as she goes. If you disobey me, I'll call the crew aft, and charge them to observe that any miscalculations in my navigation will be owing to your interference.'

The fellow scowled, and looked ahead at the vessel, and then at a knot of sailors who were standing at the galley, and I could see that he was at a loss; in fact, a minute after, never having spoken a word, during which time he frequently sent his gaze at the craft over the bow, he abruptly crossed to the lee side of the deck and fell to patrolling, coming now and again to a stand to leeward of the sailor at the helm, with whom he would exchange a few words, whilst he swayed on his rounded shanks, with his arms folded upon his breast, occasionally stooping to obtain a view of the whaler under the curve of the fore-course.

It was his watch below, and at another time he would have promptly gone forward. His remaining on deck signified an insulting menace, an impudent threat to watch me, and to guard his own and the crew's interests against me. But I was resolved not to seem to notice this behaviour, nor even to appear conscious of his presence.

The men observing that Lush kept the deck, came out of the galley and forecabin, and with abrupt shifting motions gradually drew aft to the line of the quarter-deck rail, which they overhung, feigning to watch the ship we were overtaking, though nothing could be more obvious than their real motive in drawing aft in this fashion. Wetherly alone kept forward. He stood leaning in the galley door, smoking a short pipe in as careless and unconcerned a posture as you would look to see in a lounging fellow sailing up the river Thames.

'The brutes are terribly in earnest,' said I to Miss Temple, as we stood together under the lee of the weather quarter-boat for the shelter of it. 'If ever I had had a doubt of the wisdom of my conduct in this business, the presence of that group yonder would extinguish it for good and all.'

'Forgive me,' she exclaimed; 'but were you well advised in not altering the course of this vessel?'

'The fellows must not know that I am afraid of them, or believe me to be without some resolution of character.'

'What would happen were you to attempt to hail that ship there?' she asked, with her eyes enlarging to the fear that accompanied the question, and her lips quivering as they closed to a blast of wind sweeping in a long howl betwixt the rail and the keel of the boat.

'I do not intend to hail her,' I replied; 'and we will not, therefore, distract our minds with conjectures.—Let us rather wonder,' I went on,

forcing a light air of cheerfulness upon me, 'what those whalemen will think of you when they catch a sight of your figure? Will they take you to be captain or chief-mate?'

She smiled, and slightly coloured. Indeed, at a little distance, with the rail to hide her dress, she would very well have passed for a young man, habited as she was in Captain Braine's long pilot coat and his wide-awake, which entirely hid her hair to the level of her ears, and which she kept seated on her head by means of a piece of black tape passed under her chin. But shall I tell you that her beauty borrowed a new and fascinating freshness of grace from the very oddity of her attire? For my part, I found her more admirable in the perfections of her face and form, grotesquely clothed as she was, than had she come to my side but now from the hands of the most fashionable dressmaker and the most modish of hairdressers and milliners.

The name of the old whaler lifted clear in long white letters to the heave of her square stern off the spread of froth that raced from under her counter: *Maria Jane Taylor* was her title, and I remember it now as I can remember very much smaller matters which entered into that abominable time. The green and weedy and rust-stained fabric, heeling to the pressure of the wind, and making prodigious weather of the Pacific surge as she crushed into the violet hollow with a commotion of foam such as no whale which ever her boats had made fast to could have raised in its death-agony, swarmed and staggered along with frequent wild slantings of her spars, upon which her ill-patched sails pulled in disorderly spaces. A whole mob of people, black, orange-coloured, and white stared at us from under all kinds of singular headgear over her weather rail, and a man swinging off in the mizzen shrouds, apparently waited for us to come abreast to hail us. As our clipper keel swept in thunder to her quarter, scarcely more water than a pistol-shot could measure, dividing us, Lush came up from to leeward and stood beside me, but without speaking, simply holding himself in readiness—as I might witness in the sulky determined expression in the villain's face—to silence me if I should attempt to hail. I glanced at him askant, running my eye down his round-backed muscular figure, and then put on a behaviour of perfect insensibility to his presence.

'How touching is the sight of a strange face,' said I to Miss Temple, 'encountered in the heart of such a waste as this! Rough as those fellows are, how could one take them by the hand! with what pleasure could one listen to their voices! Would to God we were aboard of her!' And I brought my foot with a stamp of momentary poignant impatience to the deck.

Our own crew staring at the whaler over the quarter-deck bulwarks were incessantly bringing their eyes away from her to fix them upon me with a manner of angry suspicion that it was impossible to mistake. The noise of the roaring of the wind in her canvas was loud in the pouring air; the blue waters foamed viciously to her tall catheads, and her green and rusty bends showed raggedly amid the frothing, foaming, and seething curves of the boiling smother rushing past her; here and there aft was the muddy glint of a disc of begrimed window amid the line of her seams,

out of which all the calking appeared to have dropped. We were passing her as a roll of smoke might.

'Barque ahoy!' bawled the long slab-sided man in the mizzen rigging in the nasal accents of the 'longshore Yankee.'

Lush at my side stood grimly staring. Several of the crew on the quarter-deck were now watching me continuously.

'What barque air you?' came in a hurricane nasal note out of the whaler's mizzen shrouds.

There was no reply from us.

'Barque ahoy, I say!' yelled the man with a frantic gesture of astonishment: 'where air you bound, and what ship might you be?'

The *Lady Blanche* rushed on; nevertheless, were we yet so close to the whaler even when we had her on our quarter that I could easily distinguish the features of the man who had hailed us as he hung motionless, as though withered by some blast from the skies, in the mizzen rigging with his mouth wide open, whilst an expression of inimitable amazement was visible in the rows of faces along the bulwark rail, white and coloured alternately, like the keys of a piano-forte.

On a sudden the man sprang out of the mizzen shrouds on to the deck; his legs were immensely long, and he was habited in a short monkey jacket. He started to run for the forecastle, and his prodigious strides made one think of a pair of tongs put into motion by some electrical power. He gained the forecastle head, where for one moment he stood surveying us, then bringing his hands to his face, he made what is known to schoolboys as a 'long-nose' at us, turning a little sideways, that we might clearly observe the humiliating derisiveness of his posture. In this attitude he remained whilst a man might have counted twenty; after which, with the air of a person whose mind has been relieved, he leisurely made his way aft. A little while later the old whaler was plunging amid the white throbings of her own churning a long mile astern; and in half an hour she looked to be scarcely more than a gleam out in the cold blue air, where there seemed a dimness in the atmosphere as of the blowing of crystals off the melting heads of the high seas.

It was not till then that Lush left the deck.

This little incident was as stern a warrant of the disposition of the crew as they could have desired to make me understand. It proved their possession of a quality of suspicion, of a character so ungovernably insolent and daring, that I might well believe, were it transformed into passion by disappointment or insincerity on my part, there was no infamy it would not render them equal to.

I do not know that I considered myself very fortunate because of the fine weather which attended the barque in her passage of the Horn. Far better, I sometimes thought, than the strong southerly breeze, the flying skies of dark winter blue, the brilliant rolling and foaming of long arrays of billows brimming in cream to the ivory white sides of the little ship, and aiding her headlong flight with floating buoyant liftings and fallings that timed the measures of her nimble sea-dance with her waving mastheads as the baton of a band conductor keeps the elbows of his

fiddlers quivering in unison—far better might it have been for us, I would often think, had the month been the mid-winter of the Horn, with heavy westerly gales to oppose our entrance into the Pacific Ocean, and fields of ice to hinder us yet, with some disaster on top to force us to bear away as the wind might permit for the nearest port.

The rounding of this giant iron headland was absolutely uneventful. A fire was lighted in the little stove in the cabin, and by it, during my watch below, Miss Temple and I would sit exchanging our hopes and fears, speculating upon the future, endeavouring to animate each other with representations of our feelings when we should have arrived home, and amid safety and comfort look back upon the unutterable experiences into which we had been plunged by so trifling a circumstance as a visit to a wreck.

Thus passed the time. Every day I obtained a clear sight of the sun, and then striking the meridian of 76° west, I headed the barque on a north-north-west course for Captain Braine's island, the declared situation of which I calculated would occupy us about three weeks to reach.

It was on the afternoon of the day on which I had shifted the barque's helm, that Wilkins came to me as I sat at dinner with Miss Temple with a message from the carpenter to the effect that he would be glad of a word with me. I answered that I was at Mr Lush's disposal when I had dined, but not before. This did not occupy another ten minutes in accomplishing; my companion then withdrew to her cabin, having with much eagerness expressed a number of conjectures as to the carpenter's motive in soliciting an interview.

The man came off the poop by way of the quarter-deck and entered the cabin with his skin cap in hand.

'I observe,' said he, 'that you've altered the vessel's course.'

'That is so,' I rejoined. 'Wetherly was on deck when I left my cabin after working out my sights, and I believed he would have reported the course shifted to you.'

'No; it was Woodward [one of the sailors] that was at the helm. He calls me over and points into the binnacle and says: "Ye see what's happened?" The men 'ud be glad to know if it's all right?'

'If what is all right?'

'Why, if this here course is true for the island? They'll feel obliged if ye'll let 'em in here and show 'em the chart and 'splain the distance and the course and the likes of that to 'em yourself.'

I hardly required him to inform me of their wishes, for I had but to direct my glance at the cabin door to spy them assembled on the quarter-deck awaiting the invitation the carpenter had come to demand; all hands of them, saving Wetherly and the fellow that was steering, called Woodward by Lush.

'Certainly: let them enter,' said I; and at once fetched my chart, which I placed upon the table, and went to the other side, ruler in hand, ready to point and to explain.

The body of rough men, a few of them with their mahogany lineaments scarcely visible amidst

the whiskers, eyebrows, and falls of front hair which obscured their countenances, stood looking upon the chart with Lush in the thick of them, and Forrest's mutinous, dare-devil, rolling face conspicuous over the carpenter's shoulder.

'Now, men, what is it you want to know?' said I.

'We're a steering by the compass up above nor-nor-west,' answered Lush; 'will ye be pleased to tell us how ye make that right?'

I had to fetch a pair of parallel rulers to render my answer intelligible to the illiterate creatures who stood gaping at me with an expression of dull struggling perception that would come and go in a manner that must have moved me to laughter at another time.

'What part of this here paper is the island wrote down upon?' demanded Forrest.

I pointed with my ruler, and the whole knot of faces came together as they stooped with a sound as of a general snore arising from their vigorous breathing.

'How far is it off from where we are?' inquired one of the men. I told him. Several questions of a like kind were put to me; a growling ran amongst them as they hummed their comments into one another's ears.

'Well, men,' exclaimed the carpenter, 'there ain't no doubt to my mind. It's all right; and I'm bound to say stan'ing here, that con-sidering that Mr Dugdale guv' up the sea a good bit ago, he's managed uncommonly well down to this here time.'

There was a murmur of assent. I thought I would take advantage of this momentary posture in them of appreciation, perhaps of concession.

'Since you are all before me,' said I, 'two excepted, let me ask you a question. You are aware of course that from the very beginning of this business I have regarded your whole scheme as the effect of a madman's dream.'

Lush stared at me with an iron face; Forrest, with an impudent grin, shook his head; two or three of the fellows smiled incredulously. I proceeded, eyeing them deliberately one after the other, and speaking in the most collected tones I could command.

'I want to know this: If Captain Braine's island should have no existence in fact, what do you men propose to do?'

'No use putting it in that way!' exclaimed the carpenter, after a brief pause, and a slow, sour wagging of his head; 'the island's there. Tain't no dream. Ye'll find it right enough, I'll warrant.'

'It was described to me,' I went on, 'as little more than a reef. This is a big sea, men. A reef is easily missed in such an ocean as this.'

'You have its bearings,' exclaimed Forrest defiantly; 'if you put the barque in the place on the chart where the captain said the island is, how are we agoing to miss it, unless all hands turns puppies and keeps a lookout with their eyes shut?'

'But,' said I, preserving my temper, 'may not this hope of obtaining a large treasure have rendered you all very considerably over-confident? Suppose there is no island. Reason with me on that supposition. Imagine that we have arrived, and that there is nothing but clear

water. Imagine, if you will, that we have been sweeping those seas for a month without heaving into sight your late captain's reef. What then, I ask? What next steps have you in your minds to take? I have a right to an answer, even though I should address you only in the name of the young lady whose protector I am.'

The fellows glanced at one another. Their low, suspicious intelligence manifestly witnessed some strategic fancy underlying my question.

'Look here, Mr Dugdale,' exclaimed the carpenter, 'there's no use in your aputting it in any other way than the way we want, and the way we mean to have.' He accompanied this with a violent nod of the head. 'Though we're plain men without e'er a stroke of book-learning amongst us, we ain't to be made fools of. The island's where 'ee can find it, if ye choose, and to that there island we're bound, sir;' and he bestowed another emphatic, malevolent nod upon me.

I gazed at the fellows in silence. One glance at the array of mulish countenances should have satisfied me that there was nothing in anything I could say to induce in them other views than those they held, or to render endurable to them a discussion that must be based upon a probability of their being disappointed.

'We've stuck to our side of the bargain, sir,' said one of them.

'Ay,' cried the carpenter; 'I allow that let the gent strive as he may, there's nothen he can find in the treatment him and the lady's met with from us men to complain of.'

'I do not complain,' I exclaimed; 'have you on your side any reason to complain?'

'No, sir, and we don't want none,' the fellow responded with a look that rendered his words indiscreibly significant.

'You are satisfied, I hope,' said I, 'with the explanation I have given you as to the situation and course of the barque?'

'Yes,' answered the carpenter, with a look round.

'Then there is nothing more to be said,' I exclaimed, and picking up the chart, I carried it into my cabin.

AN ETRUSCAN CEMETERY.

THE person to whom graves and the dead are distasteful subjects had better keep aloof from Corneto. After a day spent in the Etruscan tombs, one begins to have something of a fraternal feeling for the mummies of the Pharaohs. There is nothing for it but to think of one's own latter end; and to contrast a nineteenth-century sepulchre of civilisation with the ornate and spacious tombs of these dead-and-gone ancients. The result of such a comparison is not cheering; and so the mood of lachrymose pensiveness is induced, and one is impelled to reiterate those antediluvian wails about the vanity and shortness of life, the omnipotence of Death, and the hollowness of all things.

Melancholy apart, however, this old cemetery is well worth a visit. So also is the town of Corneto itself, to which the graves are adjacent. It stands on a little hill about fourteen miles north of Civita Vecchia, and five or six miles from the coast; and it bristles with tall quadrangular

towers, as if it fancied that the arts of mediæval warfare would still, in its hour of need, suffice to protect it. The road ascends through vineyards and olive woods until the town walls seem to impend over us. Then the diligence which has carried us from the station frolics through the town gateway, and comes to a stand-still in the paved market-place immediately upon the other side of the gate. A longish, narrow, dark street runs from the square; and the street is somewhat crowded with wayfarers, who one and all seem to turn towards the coach to see what the train has sent them in the way of novelty.

There is a famous old Gothic *palazzo* close at hand, which not so long ago was the inn of Corneto. It is now degraded into worse uses. This is a thousand pities, for it were difficult in a day's search in this part of Italy to discover anything of the kind more attractive than its arched and rose windows with twisted columns, and its delightful inner courtyard—a maze of pillars with engaging capitals, and with two or three tiers of balconies looking down upon it. However, the *Locanda Grassi*, its successor on the opposite side of the street, is not despicable, for a country inn. The landlady is a peculiarly hearty, plump, old soul, and she ushers the stranger into a bedroom with a rainbow ceiling, the notion of which he by-and-by regards as a plagiarism from the Etruscan. There is word about dinner; the wine of the country is brought forward to be tasted; and the maid of the inn, a gray-eyed, pretty little creature, unlooses her tongue for a brisk course of gossip while we smoke in the large upper room that looks upon the street. A couple of bullocks' horns, mounted in wood, and set perpendicularly upon the mantel-piece, remind us that we are in a land of charms and wonders. Anon comes the celebrated Frangioni, the custodian of the tombs, to talk over the programme of the morrow. He is a courteous gentleman, with recollections of distinguished visitors; and he tells tales about Mr Dennis, of Etruscan notoriety, and his liking to lodge while in Corneto in a house full of pretty girls—tales which go far to explain why the author in question has devoted a clear hundred pages of his famous book, *Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria*, to a consideration of the cemeteries of Corneto alone.

Meanwhile, dinner is over: the juice of Montefiascone is approved; and a stray firefly flickers now and again up the dusky street. Frangioni has shaken our hand with a solemn promise that he will be with us the next morning at seven o'clock, so that our work may be well begun ere the heat of the day; and then we wander forth with a cigar to view this placid old town by moonlight. There is no knowing what the municipality would have said had they heard of this rash proceeding. For it is evident that Corneto is a town the citizens of which are all abed ere the hour of curfew. It lacks lamps; and the Corso itself catches but a faint glow of illumination from the half-open door of a café in which sundry revellers are playing billiards on a dilapidated table with cushions of cast-iron. And so we stumble along an uneven alley, steering for a point in the city walls, and at last break from the darkness upon an uneven bank of flowers and grass, having a tower pierced with windows rising

stark from the soil eighty feet high on the one hand, and the walls adjacent on the other. The moon shines on some water in the valley far beneath us. It is the river Marta; and the broad back of hillock on the opposite side of the river is the site of Tarquinia, the Etruscan city of which the Monte Rossi on which Corneto stands was but the cemetery. The moon sparkles on some white blocks which seem to be crested Tarquinia's hill. The fancy sees walls, temple bases, and what not. But in truth they are only unchiselled masses of the limestone which crops through the soil and scrub of Tarquinia. According to Betham's Celtic-Etruscan reading, the word Tarquinia means, 'the oldest settlement in civilisation.' It is odd that citizens should christen their city with such a phrase; but we need not be hypercritical about derivations. There is nothing of the city left except its cemetery.

Hist! While we stand musing about Tarquinia, tracking with the eye the course up the valley of the silvery Marta, listening to the untimely bray of an ass in a field of the farm at the base of Corneto's rock, and wondering what the Etruscans would have thought of us and of our interest in them, a stealthy step is audible behind. A boy emerges from a second alley, black as a pit's mouth, with something struggling in his hands. He rushes to the nearest part of the wall, and with a passionate, 'Now you are going to die!' hurls the 'something' over the battlements. There is a cry like that of a child, the subdued sound of collision with the jagged nether cliffs, and finally a rustle among the bushes.

'What have you done, boy?' we demand sternly, with a hand upon the startled urchin's shoulder.

'No, no!' he cries; 'not a *bambino* at all, only a cat.' It scratched mamma, and so we have killed it.'

The released assassin disappears in the gloom whence he had come, and a wakeful jackdaw in the tower asks what is the matter. But we leave the bird to solve the riddle for itself, and grope our way back to the Corso. By this time the dissolute café is shut. All Corneto is, or seems to be, asleep. The melodious clock of the white church in the market-place chimes ten as we ascend the stone stairs to our bedroom in the *Locanda*.

The next morning we have dressed and breakfasted by seven o'clock, and await the gentlemanly custodian. At eight o'clock a messenger is sent to arouse him from his bed. It is nine o'clock ere he appears, smoothing his sleek beard, and looking fresh and much at ease. He begs pardon a thousand times; the engagement had slipped from his mind. To atone for his negligence, he peremptorily orders a carriage to be ready for us in ten minutes. It is but ten minutes' walk to the first of the tombs, he says, in inconsequent comment upon the hire of the conveyance. 'As for the cost, it will be but five or eight francs additional.' A man of immense *savoir faire*, this Frangioni. His father-in-law was custodian of the tombs for thirty years, and he has already held the keys for half as long. He is more like the head-keeper of a Scotch deer forest than a guardian of sepulchres. And it may be doubted if his heart is in his work. But he is the authority of Corneto on things Etruscan. The massy

gold ring of an archaic mode upon one of his fingers, and the various leaden weights and bronze *fibulæ* pendent from his watchchain, are the insignia of his profession.

We drive through the city gates, and soon find ourselves upon a bleak, treeless tongue of upland, of which, in fact, the rock of Corneto itself is the north-western extremity. Below us, to the right, are the vineyards and grain-fields and olive groves of the seaboard; the glittering Mediterranean; and the headland of Monte Argentario. To the left, across the valley, is the hill of Tarquinia. They are carrying hay from its lower slopes. Beyond, towards the interior, we see the dull shapes of the Apennines. There is not much beauty in any part of the prospect. A man must be replete with sensibility, imagination, and archaeological lore to be able to refashion the Monte Rossi and Tarquinia thoroughly to his contentment.

At a signal from Frangioni the carriage is now arrested. We are by the first of the tombs. The land is thick with asphodels gone to seed, poppies and thistles in fervent bloom, mint, wild thyme, and gorse. Having alighted, we force a way through this perfumed tangle to the iron-bound door which lets upon the sepulchre. With some effort the door is opened; a staircase cut in the rock is disclosed; this we descend, and at the foot of it is another gate. We light candles, open this second gate, which is green with mould, populous with slugs and snails and other creeping things, and are in the empty sepulchre.

One's first Etruscan tomb comes like a revelation to one's intelligence. It is on a par with the other important stages of development in life: first balls, first loves, and the like. There is something bewildering about it. To think that these ancients—our inferiors, we flatter ourselves, in nearly everything—should be able to design and execute such laborious and elegant chambers for their dead!—apartments by the side of which the mortuary chapels of the fashionable cemeteries of civilisation are tawdry and unpleasant! A visit to Corneto is more educative in a classical sense than a whole year devoted to Livy, Florus, and such other writers as make mention of the Etruscan people.

The tombs of Monte Rossi are so numerous that the more important of them are scheduled, furnished with white triangular entrance portals, and numbered, like the houses in Italy, on little enamel discs. But they are known distinctively rather by the subject of the frescoes which adorn their walls than by their number in the city of the dead. You do not go to see tomb No. 4, but the Grotta del Tifone, so called from the remarkable figure of the Etruscan Lucifer upon one of the columns which support it. The tombs that have been discovered are reckoned by hundreds; but little by little the colours of the frescoes fade, are corrupted by the damp and the loathsome slugs which slime them; and so they lapse into ruin, and are eventually filled up and forgotten. One has to be careful in rambling without a guide about this hill of the dead, for the brambles and scrub grow with a beguiling denseness over the mouths of abandoned tombs, into which the unwary investigator may easily enough be precipitated.

Frangioni is voluble of archaeological lore during

the hours we spend in these fascinating vaults. But really the drawings on the walls tell their own tale sufficiently well. What spirited studies in red, black, and green they are! dancing-girls, merry-makers, the dead and the dying, hunters and fishermen, birds, beasts, and fishes, galore! These chambers of the dead are a gallery of pictures of the domestic life of the Etruscans. Nothing could be more vivid. The lamps and vases and ornaments of gold and bronze with which the Corneto Museum is crowded might have served as the models for the details of the frescoes. Such sepulchres are worth libraries of descriptive literature. Frangioni is evidently pleased at enthusiasm in his clients. He dilates on the laudable conduct of his German visitors, who spend entire days in the tombs, heedless of rheumatism, the bloated toads under their feet, and the spiders suspended over their heads.

The heat of the day is over when we turn our back upon Tarquinia's cemetery. We meet a funeral procession coming out of the gates of Corneto. The modern necropolis is a walled enclosure, over a part of the old necropolis. Only the other year, indeed, a grave was dug so deep that, after the burial, the corpse broke through the ceiling of one of the Etruscan tombs. This incident gave a ghastly touch of realism to the experience of the visitors who were the first to enter the sepulchre after the disaster. For my part, however, I should be sorry to carry away any such sensational reminiscence of Corneto. It takes rank with Baalbec as one of the unique places of the world. It is a pity its unique attractions are not also as durable as those of Baalbec.

THE STORY OF A STORY.

CHAPTER III.

As Mr Wegswood rightly guessed that the terms on which he had secured publication of Miss Malden's book would not be gratifying to her pride, he considered it prudent to omit all mention of the part his purse was to play in the transaction. And the young lady was given to understand that Mr Twinkleby, after glancing through the manuscript, had been so impressed with it that he consented to push on its production without loss of time. She was, we need hardly say, absolutely ignorant of such matters, and saw nothing singular in the apparent quickness with which the publisher had formed his opinion; his trained eye had, of course, detected the excellence of the story in a fraction of the time required by an amateur critic.

The thought that her novel had been thus accepted upon its merits restored all Alicia's natural amiability, and dissipated her resentment against the purblind Arthur Meadowson. Prospective fame made her generous; and now that her own views had been so irrefutably confirmed, she could spare time to remember that she had begged hard for his candid opinion, and that it had been given with manifest reluctance. Her wrath, never very lasting, died away, and the only feeling that now qualified her old liking for the young man was one of slightly contemptuous pity for his lack of discernment. She was tempted to write and tell him how completely

wrong his judgment had been; but desisted. She intended to bestow forgiveness with reproof, and decided that the best way of doing this would be to send him a copy of 'At Eden's Gate,' with the kindest regards of the authoress, when the book burst upon the world six weeks hence.

To Mr Wegswood's self-indulgent eye, it appeared that his master-stroke had produced all the results anticipated; and it was undeniable that, from the day of his visit to Paternoster Row, Miss Malden's bearing towards him was more friendly. Had he only known it, he was receiving neither more nor less than the measure of gratitude his services had earned. It was a pleasant delusion, and it led him to imagine himself very much nearer the goal than he was. He considered his engagement to Miss Malden as good as accomplished, and spared the young lady the task of enlightening him by once more adopting his old attitude of pursued instead of pursuer. He had resolved to put the momentous question on the day that saw the great novel make its debut; that occasion would be peculiarly appropriate; and he had no inclination to cut short the present sweet dalliings, which derived not their least attraction from the undisguised interest with which they were watched by his friends.

For Rumour, coupling his name with that of Alicia Malden, had risen from her lair in the Unknown, and was spreading the news with the certainty of infection. There were lamentably few 'affaires' that season, and this one was a real boon to afternoon tea-tables. The knowledge that his name was in every one's mouth as the future husband of the beautiful Miss Malden was nectar to Mr Wegswood; and if he did not actually encourage the rumour, he did nothing to allay it.

Had the brewer's cerebral cavity been large enough to contain more than one idea at a time, a conversation he held with Mr Twinkleby, about a week after his visit to Paternoster Row, would have aroused some misgivings as to the farsightedness of his policy in respect to Miss Malden's novel, and made him less serenely confident of success. He was strolling up St James's Street one evening, on his way to his chambers, to dress for dinner, when the publisher suddenly appeared from a side street and button-holed him, with obvious purpose.

'I'm glad to meet you, Wegswood,' he said. 'I intended to write, but was called out of town and quite forgot it. I wanted to communicate with you about that manuscript you brought me.'

'Manuscript?' queried Mr Wegswood, wrinkling his brows and frowning into vacancy. 'Ah yes—remember—lady asked me to give it you. Dining with her to-night, by the way. Suppose I may tell her it's all right?'

'Well, I'm sorry to say that is just what it's not.'

'Eh?' exclaimed Mr Wegswood, startled into temporary sanity.

'The plain truth is that I can't publish it. I wouldn't put the firm's name on such a production.'

The last remnant of Mr Wegswood's languor vanished, and his rubicund countenance grew pale. 'Can't publish it?' he echoed incredulously. 'You said you would.'

'I did. But I never for a moment suspected what the contents would prove to be. I gave it to one of my people to estimate length and so on, and didn't think any more about it. Well, the next day, the reader to whom I'd given it burst into my private room without knocking, almost in a fit, and asked if I had looked at the stuff. When I inquired what he meant, he made me read a few specimen passages. I've had to wade through some baddish books in my time, but'—Mr Twinkleby recollected that the novel under discussion was the work of a friend of Mr Wegswood, and considerably refrained from further criticism. 'The upshot of it was,' he concluded, 'that I resolved to decline your commission; and I'll send the package and your cheque back to-morrow.'

Mr Wegswood wiped the perspiration from his brow, and seized the publisher by the arm, unconscious that his tightly rolled umbrella had fallen from his grasp and was lying in the turbid runlet of the gutter.

'Twinkleby!' he exclaimed in a hollow whisper, 'you don't know what depends on that book. All my happiness in life hangs upon its being published. Twinkleby, for any sake—don't refuse to print it; don't send it back. Name your own figure, make your own terms: do *anything*; but oh! don't say you won't publish it.'

Mr Twinkleby stared, as well he might; his petitioner's anguish was so very real and intense, that it piqued his curiosity. When Mr Wegswood brought him the manuscript he had let fall nothing that could lead any one to suppose he possessed any interest in it; and now the information that it was unworthy the honours of print threw him into a fever of agitation. The publisher was before all things an obliging man, and he began to waver in his decision.

'Really, Wegswood,' he answered reassuringly, 'I had no idea you attached any importance to the publication of the book. I understood that you were simply executing an errand for a lady, when you brought it me. I don't want to pry into your private affairs, of course; but if you have any sound reason for wishing me to do the business, I'll reconsider it.'

'I can't tell you—exact reason, Twinkleby,' gasped the unhappy lover; 'very private indeed, but most important. Just name your price for doing it; I'll pay you anything in reason.'

'I don't want to take advantage of you, my dear sir. The thing that puzzles me is, how on earth to make a book of it. If you remember, you said the lady particularly wished no alterations made.'

'No,' said Mr Wegswood, beginning to recover himself; 'you must not mutilate it on any account.'

Mr Twinkleby could not repress a smile at the thought of 'mutilation'; but, recollecting his 'reader's' assertion that no manipulation would improve the story, let the matter pass.

'Well, Wegswood,' he said after a little consideration, 'I'll have the book set up as it stands, after correcting the English and spelling. I must do that; I don't think it need distress you, for the authoress is not likely to recognise the changes in print.'

'Correct the spelling,' assented Mr Wegswood dubiously, so profound was his respect for Alicia's

commands, 'and if you must, the English as well.—But, Twinkleby, I can't consent to your cutting out a line of it. She would throw me over in a minute if I let you spoil her book, and I'd rather—rather'—Imagination failed to suggest an alternative; he fell back a pace and gazed at the publisher in eloquent silence.

'All right, Wegswood; don't alarm yourself. I'll stretch a point, and do the job in your own way. But I warn you that I shall charge pretty heavily for it; a rising house like ours has a reputation to make.'

'I've given you a hundred, Twinkleby. How much more do you ask?'

'Another hundred and fifty. It's a lot of money, I know, but'—

'My dear fellow,' interposed Mr Wegswood in tones tremulous with grateful emotion, 'it's nothing compared to the end in view. I'll send you a cheque this evening.'

He pressed the publisher's hand warmly, and continued his walk to Dover Street. Never in the whole course of his life had he passed through so agonising a quarter of an hour. 'At Eden's Gate' was leading him like the ignis fatuus; he was blind to the dangers of the chase, and the thought that the guiding light had been so nearly blown out made him shiver.

'Merciful powers!' he exclaimed as he sank into the deepest armchair in his luxurious rooms and drank off a glass of sherry to steady his nerves, 'supposing Twinkleby had stuck to his refusal and sent it back. What should I have done?' There was no one to suggest that London contained many publishers less scrupulous than his friend, and this simple solution of the hypothetical difficulty did not occur to him. He therefore enjoyed a grateful sense of having escaped danger by the only possible road—namely, paying up.

'It's costing me a good deal, one way and another,' he said to himself as he went to his dressing-room. 'But I was prepared for that. And after all, he continued with a thrill of devotion, 'what is money but road-metal to pave the way to Her?' After which flight of poetic feeling, Mr Wegswood applied himself to the serious task of choosing sleeve-links to wear that night.

The effects of his interview with Mr Twinkleby had not entirely worn off when he appeared in Brook Street. He was grave and preoccupied, and less aggressively languid than usual; more sparing of personal reminiscence, and altogether a more companionable person than when he essayed to make himself agreeable. Mrs Malden's party was a large one that evening; but he contrived to snatch a few minutes with Alicia after dinner, and repeated as much of his conversation with Mr Twinkleby as he thought judicious. In brief, without distinctly intending it, he impressed her with the opinion that he was keeping jealous watch over the publisher to ensure her wishes being carried out; and he went away, having raised himself several degrees in her estimation.

'Mr Wegswood was very nice this evening,' she observed to her mother, when the last guest had driven away.

'Don't you always find him so?' inquired Mrs Malden with a shade of reproof in her tone.

'Well, no, mamma ; I can't say I do.'

'He admires you very much,' said her mother, as though appealing to Alicia's sense of justice to reciprocate the admiration.

'So I believe,' returned Miss Malden calmly.

'You know what Mrs Brotwig told me the other day, Alicia,' said Mrs Malden more gravely. 'People are beginning to chatter.'

The young lady rose from her seat on the fender stool with a gesture of impatience. She knew her neighbour's propensity for gossip, and cordially disliked being the subject of it.

'Mamma, I can't help that,' she protested. 'I can't prevent Mr Wegswood's coming here six times a week ; and so long as he does that, we can't be surprised if people talk.'

Mrs Malden put the last touches to the flowers she had been rearranging, and sat down on a low chair near the hearthrug, on which her daughter was standing in an attitude of unstudied grace, with one arm on the mantel-piece.

'Alicia,' she began, entreatingly, 'don't keep your mother out of your confidence, I implore you. Tell me plainly, dear ; what are you going to say when Mr Wegswood speaks to you ?'

'He hasn't spoken yet, mamma,' answered Alicia evasively.

'I know that, dear ; but it would be false modesty on your part to doubt the meaning of his attentions. I shall not live for ever, and the wish of my life is to see you happily settled before I go. Will you not confide in me, Alicia ?'

'Really, mamma, I am keeping nothing from you—about Mr Wegswood, at all events,' she added, thinking of the weighty secret now within measurable distance of disclosure. 'I like him, and I confess, better now than I did a month ago ; but I haven't even thought what I should say if he asked me to marry him.'

'Keeping nothing from you—about Mr Wegswood, at all events,' repeated Mrs Malden to herself with a sharp twinge of anxiety. The reservation pointed directly to some other man, and who should he be but the absent Arthur Meadowson ? To that gentleman himself, she had, as we have heard, no objection—quite the reverse. But when his existence raised an obstacle to the union upon which she had set her heart, he was a very odious person indeed.

Mrs Malden had not been born in Mayfair, but in the more industrious neighbourhood of Clerkenwell. Her late husband had commenced at the lowest rung of the ladder, and had fought his way up to the top by sheer hard work and shrewdness. Late in life, he had taken Sarah Hodding to wife from amongst his own kindred, raising her at a step from poverty to affluence. And thanks to the husband's acknowledged abilities and the wife's unflinching discretion, the pair had gathered a large circle of friends round them long before Death laid his hand on Mr Malden.

It was therefore not wonderful that the widow should regard this heir to a peerage with peculiar favour as a desirable husband for her only daughter. There was much to recommend him, and the worst any one could urge against him was his indolence and conceit. 'Faults of youth,' Mrs Malden had often said to herself ere now, 'due to his training and want of good advisers.

They will disappear in time.' And from the day he allowed her to see his ambition, the marriage had been the dream of her life. Since Arthur Meadowson's departure, she had never mentioned that gentleman's name to Alicia ; hoping, as she admitted to the more suitable candidate, that her supposed regard for him was merely a passing caprice.

'Well, Alicia,' she said, rising from her chair after a long and thoughtful silence, 'I won't press you about it. If you have not the feeling for Mr Wegswood which a girl must have for the man she marries, there's nothing more to be said. Position is not everything, of course, and I would not have you buy it at a price. But at the same time, you should remember that there are very few men with Mr Wegswood's advantages. And don't gauge his character by his manner, which I grant has some defects.'

'It has,' assented Alicia, glad to be able to agree with her mother on some point ; 'but he is improving, mamma'—with gracious condescension.

Mrs Malden smiled approval, and ventured a step on the ground she had heretofore so carefully avoided. 'I know no young man I would sooner see your husband, Alicia ; and I only trust you will not throw away substance for shadow.'

'I am in no hurry to marry any one,' said Alicia, returning her mother's good-night kiss with more than ordinary warmth ; 'I am very happy at home with you.'

'She means,' said Mrs Malden, sorrowfully, to herself as she went up-stairs, 'that she is willing to wait for young Meadowson. Well, what must be, must be ; but I did hope things would have gone otherwise.'

So the mother, accepting the imaginary inevitable, turned for solace to the thought that her child was at least no disciple of the present school ; that having given her love, she would not withdraw it, though it were almost hopeless, and the shadow of a coronet arose to tempt her constancy.

While Mrs Malden mused upon these things in the privacy of her own room, Alicia, sitting in her favourite place on the drawing-room fender stool, was honouring Mr Wegswood with more sober thought than she had ever spent upon him before. He was unquestionably a great match ; but she could not discover that his wealth and prospects weighed much in his favour ; indeed, she thought, he would be a much nicer man without them, for then he might perhaps think a little less of himself. But he was good-natured, and had really been very kind about her book ; he seemed to have taken a great deal of trouble over it. He was improving without doubt ; at one time he had always treated her as a child, upon whom intelligent conversation would be thrown away ; and if there was one thing Alicia Malden thoroughly hated, it was to be treated as a child, whose proper mental diet was frivolity and nonsense. However, Mr Wegswood had given up that method latterly.

From Mr Wegswood, her thoughts flew to her novel and Mr Meadowson. It was odd that a man whose literary tastes were acknowledged to be sound should have dealt so severely with 'At Eden's Gate.' He must have told what he really

believed to be the truth about it, for one of the nicest traits in his character was, that he never said an unkind word when he could possibly say a kind one; moreover, his affection for her would have made him lenient. By the way, it was a little curious that Mr Twinkleby should have snapped so eagerly at the novel, and have said nothing at all of his intentions regarding payment. Probably he would send the cheque when the book came out; not that she cared about the money itself; but it would add greatly to the éclat of the occasion to be able to exhibit the cheque as the earnings of her own pen.

'I wonder how the papers will criticise it?' speculated the authoress as she rose to retire to her room. 'I mustn't forget to ask Mr Wegswood to tell Twinkleby to send me all the critiques as they appear.'

And Miss Malden went to sleep, picturing the *Saturday Review* in throes of respectful laudation.

While these events were passing in London, Arthur Meadowson, at B—, was settling down with the adaptability to circumstances peculiar to him. Ever since his induction to the Secretaryship he had lived in a state of chronic wonderment at the trivial nature of the duties required of him in return for the liberal salary he drew. He had hoped to find in his new sphere opportunity for proving his mettle, and perhaps of opening connections with people who would be able to assist his advancement; but he soon realised that his office was little better than a sinecure. It was a disappointment. Although he left town weighed down with the thought that Alicia Malden was hopelessly estranged, it was not long before he persuaded himself that his offence would be condoned; she was too good-hearted and sincere to bear malice, and he lived on in the desperate hope that something unlooked for might occur to restore him to her side and to her good graces.

He continued to employ his many leisure hours with literary work, and thus maintained correspondence with his publishing friends in London. Among these, Mr Twinkleby, as proprietor and editor of the *Ludgate Hill Magazine*, was the one with whom he held the most frequent and familiar communication, for his business connection with the *Ludgate Hill* had laid the foundation of close personal friendship with the editor.

He had been in B— for little more than a month, when he received one morning a letter from Mr Twinkleby which contained among other items of intelligence, of no interest to us, one that cast a black shadow over his life, and threw him into that condition of blighted misery which darkens existence while it lasts.

'Our friend, Gussy Wegswood, is going to be married,' wrote Mr Twinkleby. 'He brought me a novel for publication the other day, and I have since learned that he is engaged to the lady who wrote it. I should never have suspected Wegswood of rushing into matrimony; but the unexpected is always happening.'

Arthur Meadowson read this over twice, and then laid down the letter with a sick feeling of despair. There could be no doubt of the identity of the lady to whom Mr Wegswood was engaged,

and he felt that Alicia was now lost to him for ever. Arthur felt that he had himself to thank for his position, and the knowledge did nothing to make it less miserable.

MARRIAGE BY CAPTURE.

To all classes of Her Majesty's subjects a marriage is a topic of absorbing interest. Politicians, formerly the best of friends, but since estranged, owing to their political proclivities, and who, save to glare at one another from opposite benches, seldom meet under the same social roof, are drawn together once more when a mutual friend takes upon him, or herself, to enter into the bond of matrimony, and for a time sink their differences in honour of the occasion. Perhaps the spirit of good-fellowship which seems to permeate everybody on the happy day may even induce the bitterest of foes to forget their wrongs and shake hands in a manner which shows they are both delighted to make it up and little likely to repent of so doing. The business man forsakes his daily task, and nearly everybody in the office gets a holiday; the lawyer returns his briefs, or has them 'devilled' by some lucky junior who has long wanted to find his legal legs; the village turns out in Sunday best to gaze at the array of bunting and triumphal arches; and even the hermit throws off some of his impenetrability at the sound of the marriage bells.

The winning of the bride may have caused many sleepless nights; at one time the fates are propitious, at another frowning; but at last the difficulties and doubts have been overcome, and all troubles left behind, forgotten, when the day comes to crown the lover's patience with what he has so long desired.

But all the trials of satisfying the stern demand for a handsome settlement, overcoming family prejudices, and winning the affections of the lady, are little in comparison with those we read of as having tortured the lover long ago, and even now in distant lands. Hundreds of years before Britain had begun to attract the attention of the bold Roman adventurers, intent on gain and conquests new, we find that men had to take wives unto themselves by force of arms, or by some base subterfuge which went not altogether unpunished in those troubled times. Every school-boy has felt the irksome task of translation relieved by the story of Romulus and his city full of men pining for the company of women, and driven at last by their desperation to their cowardly deception. Who has not heard of the proclamation of games to be celebrated in honour of the god Consus, the invitation of the Latins and Sabines to the festival, during which Romulus and his fiery youths rushed upon them and carried off the virgins, leaving the matrons to escape as best they could?

The Romans were not the only people of the classic age who had such difficulties to overcome, for the Spartan damsels also had to be compelled by violence to submit to matrimony.

But although in very early times a husband had to resort to violence to obtain a wife, we find that when these nations had settled down into comparative civilisation, it became part of the ceremony of marriage that there should be a

show of capture on the husband's part. In Rome and Sparta, among the lower classes, when a marriage was arranged, the bride sat confidently on her mother's lap, and was not at all surprised when her husband came accompanied by his friends to complete his part of the contract by tearing her away from her mother's fond embraces.

Records show that violence or capture was a necessary feature of a marriage in nearly every land at one time or another, and even at the present day among many races the custom is preserved in a modified form. An interesting instance of recent times is given of the Khonds. All the preliminaries being satisfactorily arranged, each family contributes something towards adorning the feast which is prepared at the bride's dwelling. The feast is succeeded by dancing and singing well into the night, until it is time for the real business to commence. An uncle of the bride takes her on his shoulders, and an uncle of the bridegroom does the same for him while the dance is at its height. Suddenly they exchange their burdens; and the uncle of the bridegroom disappears with the bride, hotly pursued by her female friends, who are kept at bay by the comrades of the bridegroom striving their utmost to keep them off and cover her flight. She is wrapped in a scarlet cloak; while the young women even go so far as to hurl stones and bamboos at the devoted bridegroom until he has escaped with his bride to the verge of the village. Then the ceremony is complete, and he is allowed to conduct his hard-won spouse to his abode without further molestation.

It has been suggested that in the hurling of the stones we can trace the origin of the throwing of old slippers after the wedded couples of our own land; but it seems a long way to go to Khondistan to derive the origin of the amusing custom over which so much skill is sometimes exercised to ensure the slipper keeping company with them on their honeymoon.

Among the Kalmucks we have a slight variation of the programme. It seems that the man who wants to marry any particular girl has to win her by the fleetness of his horse. She is mounted on horseback, and gallops off as fast as she can go. He follows; and if he can catch her she is his wife, and has to return to his tent with him. We are told that there has never been an instance where she has been caught if she has no desire to become his wife; but it would seem from this, that after he has paid her parents the price they agreed upon, she has no option but to avoid the marriage by a successful flight.

It is not unknown to many that until quite recently a similar custom prevailed in Wales. The bridegroom having won the damsel's heart, appeared with all his friends mounted, at her door on the wedding morn and demanded her from her parents. The bride's friends, likewise on horseback, refused to give her up; upon which a scuffle ensued. She was suddenly mounted behind her nearest kinsman and carried off, pursued by the bridegroom and the whole body of friends, who with loud shouts and much laughter gallop after her. It was not uncommon to see two or three hundred people riding along at full speed, crossing in front, and jostling one another, to the delighted amusement of the

onlookers. When they and their horses were thoroughly exhausted, the bridegroom was allowed to overtake the bride, carry her away in triumph, the whole party finishing the day with feasting and festivity.

Sir Henry Piers gave an account of a similar kind of ceremony in the wilds of Ireland, where the interested parties met somewhere between the two dwellings to discuss the matter and make arrangements. If an agreement was concluded, the agreement bottle was drunk, and then the bride's father sent round to all his neighbours and friends to collect the wife's portion, to which every one gave a cow or heifer. These the husband had to restore to their respective donors if the bride died childless within a certain time. On the day of bringing home, the bridegroom and his friends rode out to meet the bride and her friends at the place of meeting. Being come near each other, the custom was of old to cast short darts at the company attending the bride, but at such a distance that seldom any hurt ensued, although we do hear that on one such occasion a noble lord lost an eye, which must have gone far to sound the knell of this quaint old custom.

Another curious instance affording evidence of ancient capture occurs in a certain Arab tribe. The betrothal takes place apparently in a similar manner to that of young English people of the nineteenth century; but the marriage is only rendered complete by the husband bringing a lamb in his arms to the tent of the girl's father and there cutting its throat before witnesses. As soon as the blood falls to the ground the marriage is complete, and he retires to his tent to await his lady. A game of hide-and-seek is played by the girl and by the people of the village, who pursue her as she runs from tent to tent. At last she is caught, and led off in triumph by some of the women to her lover, who, taking possession of her, forces her into his tent.

Perhaps the Bedouin Arabs of Mount Sinai conduct their matrimonial arrangements in the strangest fashion, for when a man desires to marry, he goes to the maiden's father and makes a bid, which may or may not be accepted. Should the father think the offer sufficiently tempting, the sale is completed without the chief person concerned being consulted. When she comes home in the evening with the cattle, she is met at a short distance from the camp by her intended husband and two of his friends, and is carried off by force to her father's tent. If, however, she has time to defend herself, and suspects their errand, she defends herself like a young tigress, biting, kicking, throwing sticks and stones and anything that comes to hand at her antagonists, often injuring them severely, even though she is not altogether averse to the match. The greater resistance she makes the greater praise she receives from her companions, who record it in her favour for ever after. When she is safely in her father's tent, they throw a man's cloak over her, and make a formal announcement of her future husband's name. She is placed on a camel in her bridal dress still struggling with might and main, and has to be held on by the young men. Then she is led round three times, and afterwards taken into her

husband's tent, the ceremony being wound up by the usual feast and presents to the bride.

In comparing these few instances, culled from current authorities upon folklore and kindred subjects, it will be seen how prosaic is the modern English marriage, which, even after a thoroughly romantic courtship, peaceably assures the ardent lover of his victory. There are not many fashionable young men about town who would seek matrimony if it could only be attained at the risk of a broken head or other practical demonstration of his bride's prowess.

PARIS SYNDICATE OF PROFESSIONAL MENDICANTS.

IN the autumn of 1888 the special Commission appointed by the Municipal Council of Paris to study the condition of mendicancy in the French capital delegated two of their number, Messrs Georges Berry and Piperaud, to visit the establishments frequented by professional beggars. During the second week of December we accompanied these explorers in their plunge into the dark continent where rogues and vagabonds have their seclusion, when we succeeded in obtaining interesting particulars regarding an extensive and comparatively wealthy Association known by the high-sounding title of the Paris Syndicate of Professional Mendicants. The existence of a corporation of the kind had been known to the authorities for some time; but it had never been fully investigated. The first knowledge of it had come from an old man, who one evening was set upon and severely assaulted by half-a-dozen equally impoverished-looking persons in the Champs-Élysées. The assailants escaped; and the only explanation the old man could give was that he had been warned off the hunting-ground by other alms-seekers; and as he had not gone, had been attacked—all, he believed, because he did not belong to 'The Syndicate.' Other details he could not or would not give, and there the matter rested, while the Minister of Police and the Maire of Paris discussed in whose province the matter of unearthing the corporation lay. Mendicants in the streets were under the eye of the police: at home, they were subject to the Municipality; but in view of the coming Exhibition, the Council set to work.

Every observer in Paris knows that there is an incalculable number who daily implore charity in the streets. Out of the two million seven hundred thousand residents, it is calculated that one in eighteen, or one hundred and fifty thousand, live on charity with a tendency towards crime. In London, the proportion is one in thirty. From this number must be deducted a third, who profess to be occupied regularly as cigar-end merchants, rag-pickers or *chiffonniers*, broken-bread collectors, newspaper hawkers—known as *dans la journalisme*—picture and book hawkers, song-sellers, street musicians—who cannot play the trombone or trumpet they carry, but demand coppers, or they will do their best—pavement artists and other *batteurs du pave*. Many of these have their own Syndicates, as that of the cigar-end merchants, who have a regular market in the Place Maubert; or of the *chiffonniers*, whose headquarters are in the Rue

Sainte Marguerite. But there is a good hundred thousand who are nothing but mendicants.

After much wandering through slums and into taverns of the lowest class on the outlying Boulevards, without coming upon any traces of a Union save of the most transient nature amongst the hundreds of wretches we encountered, we were advised to try a place right in the centre of Paris. It proved to be the spot we wanted. It is a large wine-shop, known as 'La Cave,' at No. 36 Rue Montorgueil, a main street running almost due north from the middle of the Central Markets. When we arrived, the place was well crowded, and presented a striking spectacle. In this den, with damp black walls, unplastered, and overgrown with fungus and clouds of cobwebs, a black roof of bare beams, the many recesses filled with sticks and boxes and broken furniture, there was only one large-flamed, smoking oil-lamp, which threw a dim light on a crowd of evil-looking men and women. Here and there was a filthy-topped rotten table, resting obliquely on shaky legs, surrounded by groups of men, women, and children, most of them drunken, and all showing the brands and stains of vice in its various stages. On the ground, the bare earth, were sitting, lying, or huddled together, scores more of women and children or men stretched in the last stage of helpless drunkenness. All had the wrinkled, grimacing countenances of the world's dregs; some were fat and bloated of face and body; most had lean sharp shoulders half-covered with loathsome rags, tangled hair, eyes bleared or glistening with the side-glance of a wolf, legs wrapped in dirty loose bandages, covering real sores or simulating ugly wounds, and bodies swathed in shreds and tatters. We had been in Marseilles when cholera and smallpox were rampant, and the sufferers from these two most loathsome of all diseases had been collected hurriedly in temporary hospital sheds; but the ghastly spectacle was nothing to this. Probably, there was not one person in this den suffering from any ailment calling for medical treatment; but the aggregate of disease there, resulting from the lowest vice and utter animal degradation, was sufficient to have polluted any honest community. The whining beggar on the street may seem individually a harmless unfortunate; but here collectively, without the mask that tickles charity, the gang seemed loosened from the lowest Inferno. As we soon learned, it was not poverty, nor was it crime or criminal tendencies that could be held to account for this accumulation of bestial creatures, but utter sloth and besotted viciousness.

After the first growl at our intrusion, they were harmless animals. They accepted our plea of being provincial artisans looking about Paris, and needed little persuasion to partake of a bottle of superior wine. With three of their leaders we sat in a partitioned corner, and let them become gradually not merely loquacious but arrogantly communicative. It was their day of reunion. Every Wednesday from ten P.M. till twelve, all the members of the Syndicate meet in La Cave for the distribution of the week's funds. Daily they hand over to the appointed President and Treasurer their gatherings. They number several hundreds, and every

man and woman's post has a fixed or approximated value, which must be realised. Should there be any falling-off or any suspected discrepancy, the post is given to a more capable person. There have been cases of what our informant called embezzlement on the part of a collector; but they were always found out and punished. It would be difficult for any member of the Association with subversive ideas to dispose of any sum retained. If he squandered it on the road home, it would be known at once, and he would know what fate waited him in La Cave. If he were suspected of secreting any coins, he would be quickly stripped, searched; and if found guilty, consigned to a more difficult station. He might even be expelled, and then, woe betide him if he went to any of the Syndicate's stations. He would have the treatment dealt to any other outsider who intruded on the reserved hunting-grounds. Poachers are disposed of as in the case before mentioned in the Champs-Élysées, though it seldom requires to be carried to that extreme. A hint usually suffices. The great safeguard, however, is the indifference of the members to anything beyond the satisfaction of the day and the natural recklessness as to the future which brought them to their present state. They get their share in the division. As the stations are allocated, they have no more right to the sums they collect than the others, and there is enough to be made out of the profession legitimately to satisfy their immediate wants. The embezzlers quickly drift into crime, which entangles them with the police; and it was the boast of our informants that there are no criminals in the Syndicate. They are men and women with the deeply rooted idea, which cannot be eradicated by any amount of preaching, that it is preferable to live well by doing nothing than to starve to death by working.

We were carefully assured that those whom we saw were the *vauriens* of the Association, *bons enfants* all, but inclined to squander every penny the moment the distribution was made. The Syndicate has a variety of systems in dealing with the collections of its members. In several cases, especially for well-known frequenters of a particular site, it levies contributions of a fixed sum per week, in return for which the Syndicate allows no rival to interfere with the mendicant. The protégé of many regular patrons finds this to his advantage. In general, the sums collected are divided in a very equal proportion, a few receiving an extra percentage, *pro rata*, on their drawings. A certain percentage is retained for the general expenses of the Syndicate and for the reserve fund. There is no sick or burial fund—the sick being best able to beg, and having the free hospitals at their service, and funerals of the poor being a State arrangement. The reserve fund has in part been applied to the purchase of a house where any of the members who choose may lodge at the rate of one franc (tenpence) a week, and the remainder—amounting, we were led to believe, to a considerable sum—is invested in the purchase of shares and bonds. It is safe in the hands of a small Committee; but a difficulty of the Syndicate has all along been the inability to secure able financiers. The present treasurer was once a great man in the financial world; but,

as we could understand, his faculties are not what they were, and his disinclination to plod over figures had led to frequent disputes. There was some talk of setting up a regular bureau, but it had got no further. It would not be very surprising to hear of its being established, of its issue of shares, of its being quoted on the Bourse, and of its cashier levitating by the night-train across the frontier into Belgium, all in the regular fashion. Stranger things than that have been matters of notoriety in the Paris commercial world. The more reputable members, who had gone home immediately after the distribution, had, many of them, very considerable savings. All of these are lodged in the Syndicate's funds. The members, even when they had their own little household, were not supposed to dwell in such localities as might include a safe for their documents, so that the rule of the Syndicate did not involve any hardship, while it enabled the management to keep an eye on the different banking accounts. Any member could withdraw his savings and retire when he had amassed sufficient for any likely object. The usual desire of the economical mendicant, like that of all Parisians, is to get together enough to enable him to buy a small cottage in the country, and live thereafter on an annuity; or, preferably, rank as a *rentier* or independent person retired on a competency.

Considering these points, we were inclined to give some credence to the stories regarding the possible profits and purposes of the better class of mendicants. We were allowed no sight of the official books; but an accident enabled us to draw out some fuller details as to figures. While we were talking, an old man whom we all knew by sight as a habitual seeker of charity on the Boulevard des Italiens in the evenings, and on the Place de la Bourse in the forenoons, came in, and stood at the zinc counter counting out some money to the proprietor there. He then came over to where we were sitting, and received two louis and some silver amounting to over another louis—about two pounds ten shillings in all—from one of our companions. That was his share for the week, and he grumbled at it. He drank one or two glasses of wine and left us. The man who had paid him told us the old fellow was always discontented, though he was one of the richest members of the Association.

From this we got into statistics regarding the value of the best posts. They argued no small knowledge and experience of human nature as embodied in France. The alleys in the Champs-Élysées, it appears, are good for picturesque-looking old men. On a good day, from ten to a dozen of these mendicants should each collect from thirty to forty francs, or an average of thirty shillings. This seemed exaggerated; but we were assured it was not. The number of persons allowed on the 'beat' is kept carefully limited, and intruders are speedily cleared off. To a tall thin person endowed with long white hair and beard, really or artificially patriarchal and starved-looking, who can stoop effectively, yet with an air of departed grandeur, and smile pathetically, a post on the Champs-Élysées brings in thirty or forty fifty-centime pieces and a pocketful of coppers every day. One old gentleman who was well known for many years, and bore the reputed distinction of

an effete Marquise—one of the oldest in France—we were assured cleared close on two louis a day, or about ten pounds a week. He had been a member of the Syndicate, which of course guarded him against all competition; and out of his drawings he received two pounds plus twenty per cent., from five to eight pounds, and fifty per cent., on all beyond. His share amounted to over three pounds ten shillings a week nearly all the year round. He is now in honourable retirement in the neighbourhood of Bougival. The mendicants allotted to the Champs-Élysées hand over their drawings twice a day to collectors, in case the police should take a fancy to inspect them, and are in addition pretty well watched and followed by fellow-members, lest they should dispose of any sum to a confederate.

The Bourse is another spot which can be depended upon for a pretty regular amount. The mendicants there enjoy the relics of a reputation they never possessed as quondam millionaires who lost all at some grand crash in hypothetical stock. Third on the list come the principal churches, the Madeleine and Notre Dame; but they are far from being so profitable. Pictures of charity at church doors are archaic. The real centre of the practice is where it may serve to foster the self-gratification of women and children, or weigh down the balance in the game of 'beggar my neighbour.' The Syndicate's objection to church people is that they support their protégés privately, or give alms in the smallest doles as a duty. Every beggar revels on New-year's Day, for then no Frenchman or Frenchwoman runs the risk of a beggar's malediction by refusing to pay for a *bonheur* for the year. The Syndicate complains grievously that on that day innumerable outsiders join the profession, on account of its exceeding lucrativeness for the first twenty-four hours.

The 'money-losers' form a recognised branch of the profession. These are usually children or young female recruits from the country, who bemoan pitifully a supposititious half-sovereign which a big man knocked out of their hand as they were going a message. The crowd collects, and aids to search the gutter. When the weeping damsel begins to talk of a hard-hearted mistress and suicide in the Seine as all that is left for her, the crowd becomes practical, and one effusive blue-bloused workman gives out of the sweat of his brow the first silver coin to make up the lost amount. Then the crowd disperses, patting itself on the back for its tenderness of heart towards the afflicted.

The courtyard vocalists are in general a transient portion of the Association. They should clear at least two francs out of each block where there are from a dozen to twenty tenants of varying orders, and get over ten to fifteen places in a day. Their average weekly drawings are from four to five pounds. Every courtyard is marked in a Bottin, the Paris Directory, and its value carefully reckoned. There should be no discrepancies, or the vocalist hears of it.

From La Cave we went with one of our informants to another resort of the begging fraternity in the Rue St-Martin, beyond the Boulevard Sevastopol. This den is one of the sleeping haunts almost exclusively patronised by members of the Syndicate. It is little more than a

covered-in alley, from fifty to sixty yards long, twelve or thirteen feet wide, and little more than seven feet in height. Down the middle of the room is a passage about two feet broad; and on either side, about a foot above the level of the ground, rising slightly towards the wall, is the long planking from end to end on which the sleepers lie with their feet towards the centre-way. The place was very dimly illuminated by small jets of gas turned low; and here crowd together nightly, or rather twice a night, from one hundred and fifty to two hundred persons of all ages. When we looked in, the place was packed, many crouching on the ledges and huddled on the passage. 'No matter how many are in,' said the doorkeeper, 'there is always room for more.' The rule of this and other establishments of the kind is that for one penny the visitor is entitled to lie down till two o'clock in the morning. Then all are wakened up, and go out. At four the place opens again, and for another penny the visitor may stay for the rest of the night. The entrance-way is a bar, at which the visitor is supposed to take a *consommation* or drink of some kind before going farther. This, however, is not always enforced. The reason of the break from two till four is that the place is nominally a restaurant, and must conform to the police regulations, which compel public-houses to close at two, and not open again before four.

A few doors farther along, at No. 116 in the same street, is another den of the Syndicate without the bed arrangements, but with tables and benches to be utilised instead. Here also were scores of debauched wretches; but a glance round sufficed. It is possible to sup of horrors even to satiety, and though we had gone to all the dens which our informant of the Syndicate mentioned as patronised by his fellow-members, we could have learned no more.

The Municipal Council has resolved to tolerate the existence of the Syndicate. Wiping it out would be of no public benefit, and all that can be done is to enforce more stringently the ordinances against open mendicancy. The Association is only a drop in the bucket, and not necessarily an unwholesome one.

IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.

'Mid waving grass the broken headstones lie;
The carved cross-bones show, the blades between,
And half-effaced, the once-known names are seen
'Neath bright-hued mosses, clinging tenderly.
No flower-decked mound here charms the passer-by;
The dead sleep lost below the exuberant green;
None cares to read what once their lives had been;
Their words, their deeds, have passed from memory.
It hurts our tender vanity to know
That time may bring us to the same cold plight,
When we and all we love have passed from sight,
And o'er our heads the untended grasses grow.
The daily tide of life may ebb and flow,
But we shall rest within oblivion's night.

c. g.

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